

Remarks

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-3, 5, 7-18, 20-26 and 36-39 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider his rejections in view of the amendments and remarks as set forth below.

Entry of Amendment

Applicants request that the present amendment be entered since it prima facie places the application in condition for allowance.

Allowable Subject Matter

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner considers the subject matter of claims 7, 8, 12, 16, 17, 22, 23, 36 and 37 as being allowable.

By way of the present amendment, Applicants have also amended claim 1 so that claim 1 now includes all the limitations of claim 7 plus an additional limitation. Since claim 7 has been indicated as being allowable, Applicants submit that claim 1 is also allowable as well as dependent claims 2, 3, 5 and 9-11. Similarly, claim 13 has been amended to include all the limitations of claim 16 as well as an additional limitation. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 13 is also allowable as well as dependent claims 14, 15, 18, 20 and 21. In addition, the dependency of claims 9 and 10, 24-26, 38 and 39 have been changed so that these claims now depend from allowable independent claims 1, 23 and 37. In view of this, Applicants submit that all of claims 1-3, 5, 7-18, 20-26, and 36-39 are now allowable.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being obvious over Nagahama (US Patent 6,849,864) in view of Yamada (US Patent 6, 608,330), Emerson (US Patent 6,958,497) and Koike (US Patent 6,830,948). Claims 2 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Nagahama, Yamada, Emerson and Koike and further in view of Lee (US Patent 6,720,570). Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over

Nagahama, Yamada, Emerson and Koike and further in view of Tanizawa (US Patent 6,657,234). Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Nagahama, Yamada, Emerson and Koike and further in view of Sverdlov (US Patent 6,266,355). Claims 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Nagahama, Yamada, Emerson, Koike and Sverdlov and further in view of Keller. Claims 13, 15, 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Nagahama in view of Koike. Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Nagahama and Koike and further in view of Lee. Claim 26 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Nagahama and Koike and further in view of Emerson. Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Nagahama and Koike and further in view of Tanizawa. Claim 21 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Nagahama and Koike and further in view of Sverdlov. Claims 24 and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Nagahama, Koike and Sverdlov and further in view of Keller. Claim 34 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Nagahama in view of Sverdlov and Koike. Claims 38 and 39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Nagahama, Sverdlov and Koike and further in view of Keller. Claim 35 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Nagahama, Sverdlov and Koike and further in view of Lee. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

In regard to the rejection of claims 6 and 34, these claims have been cancelled rendering these rejections moot. In regard to the rejection of claims 1 and 13, these claims have been amended to include allowable limitations as pointed out above. Accordingly, these rejections as well as the rejections of dependent claims 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15 and 18-21 are also overcome. Claims 24-26 have been amended to change dependency to depend from an independent claim which has been indicated as being allowable. Accordingly, these claims are also allowable. Likewise, claims 38 and 39 have been amended to depend from an allowable independent claim so that this rejection is likewise overcome.

Accordingly, the current claims now overcome all of these rejections.

Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patents relied on by the Examiner, either alone or in combination. In view of this, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert F. Gnuse, Reg. No. 27,295, at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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